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The Forest and the Trees

THERE is a central fact in our human condition and it is the reality of human bodies with the spirit and suffering and hope which inhabit them. We hold precariously to an awareness of this fact in times called normal: in the time of war these human persons or beings are lost to sight in the national groups, absorbed by a process of emotional simplification into the dominant figure of these groups. Thus millions of men and women living in the vast land which we call Russia disappear behind the man Stalin, millions of human beings disappear behind the man Hitler, millions behind the man Churchill, millions behind the man Mussolini and, seen from abroad, millions of Americans in all the states behind the man Roosevelt. This process of annihilating human persons may be bound inevitably to the necessarily simplified emotions of an international war and it is true, also, that there is a practical unity of aim inherent in all nations not in a state of anarchy, yet we are not interested, ultimately, in the fate of nations but in the fate of the human beings who live in, and have formed, many nations. It is upon these human beings that our attention is fixed.

Laval Again

There are those who are nazis, communists, fascists, capitalists, democrats, with their labels duly attached, but we are convinced that we must insist on attaching other labels to the human beings in Europe, as we attach them to people we know immediately. Such labels as father and son, husband and wife, the labels of baptismal names, the label prostitute, the label saint, the label farmer, the label this man is hungry, the label this man is exhausted—the label this man is himself and no others. We do this for certain obvious spiritual reasons, which may be summed up in the word charity; we do this also in order that our most practical political judgments may spring not from the accidental but from the realities of life. Specifically we do this at this time because we are faced with a frantic effort on the part of many American political commentators to find out into what closed and rigid category they may replace the suffering and imprisoned people of France. In the first confusion after the fall of France the people of that country were stripped of all that gave them political identity. They were but human beings in great distress and no one could give them more than undirected sympathy. Gradually they became visible to the outer world through personification in Pétain. Now the return of Laval, imposed by the Germans, tends to confuse the picture once again. The commentators are painfully uncertain as to whether or not they are to hand over the French people to National Socialism. Because it is entirely inhuman we consider this speculation to be devoid of final reality. What German pressure may force the French Government to concede depends entirely on factors of force. What resistance Marshal Pétain can oppose is a question of absorbing immediate interest. But beyond the military and political relations between conqueror and conquered there live in villages and cities the people of France. It is upon this people that our attention must be centered; it is in this people that we place our confidence—in the specific and singularized vocation of each one of its members.

Everywhere and Russia

THE State Department has not answered publicly the protest of England against the lifting of the moral embargo against Russia, nor the natural queries of the home public. Thus more mystery, secretiveness and distrust is engendered exactly when clarity and unity are most to be desired. The spontaneous questions are, of course: Is the government buttering up Russia because it considers the USSR fine? Is the government appeasing Russia as a play in esoteric power politics, while still deploring the Russian régime? Is England's protest a sincere expression of annoyance and of a clashing policy, or is it play-acting for propaganda purposes?

A New Appeasement?

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To the best of our own information and belief, nowhere in the world are the people so cruelly deprived of freedom of religion and speech and of freedom from fear and freedom from want as in Russia. If the State Department is supporting or condoning the Russian régime, it is doing what is wrong and its policy and personnel ought to be repudiated and changed by Americans. If this new appeasement of Russia is a move in power politics, it is an incredibly but most disconcertingly amoral and anaemic-looking one. On the basis of the recent history of appeasement and on the basis of logic, there appears to be absolutely no possibility of weaning one of Hitler's partners with dribs and dabs. The Nazi Party and Stalin's Communist Party are tied together firmly in their present policies: on all the levels from the spiritual and philosophic down to the most material and egoistic the two governments are acting on parallel lines. It is no argument that ultimately Russia's and Germany's national interests clash, for in the long run even Italy's and Germany's interests clash. Moreover, such conflict assumes a continuance of nationalism. All that doesn't stop or weaken the vast complex of forces that are now, and will for a long time, drive them together. Men will join forces against a common foe, or in pursuit of a common prey, knowing that at last they will fight among themselves for the spoils.

The President has proclaimed that America is the friend and defender of liberty and of the natural and moral law "everywhere." We pray this is so, in spite of the fact that we recognize serious limitations in our abilities, and know that such a championship is quite another thing from acting as world bully for a contingent system of social organization we doctrinairely and unilaterally assert to be exclusively virtuous. It is obvious that the US can't intervene with military might everywhere at once where law and liberty are offended. But it still remains a sinister game to play off Beelzebub against Satan. The totalitarian tyrannies constitute entirely too unified a bloc right now. Strengthening one of the leagued dictatorships without thereby strengthening the rest looks impossible—especially while Hitler with his vast power and ability exercises the double-check on the whole gang.

If the policy of our State Department clashes seriously with England's, that would be extremely confusing and bitter. The US is supposed to be helping its friends as much as is right and reasonable. Surely looking after the proper interests of the American people need not involve following out a policy of American imperialism which sacrifices British power of defense and puts this country in a clever position arranged with Russia and other enemies of freedom to build itself up at the expense of England if she fails. Are we now appeasing Russia because the Soviets threaten abandonment of China and settlement with Japan, or perhaps some Axis move in the Near East? Are we not appeasing Russia at all: only removing the moral embargo for publicity purposes to stop shipments some other way? Speculation in Machiavellianism can be endless. None of it fits with the ringing phrases of a simple crusade for righteousness and freedom. A mobilizing America looks for some answers.

Wages and Hours And Liberty

IT IS obviously in the public interest that government should have the power to control the conditions under which citizens work so as to safeguard their health and physical welfare. The principle has long been acknowledged with regard to the use of inherently hazardous materials (such as mercury gilding), grossly unsanitary working conditions, proper protection against fire—though legislatures have often been slow to exercise their power, even in such obvious matters as these. The extension of this power to the two factors which, in the long run, affect most of all the health and physical well-being of citizens—their wages and hours of work—has been bitterly fought both by those who know that such an extension would narrow the realm of their exploitation of their fellow-men and by those who maintain that the governmental establishment of minimum wages and hours would curtail what is conceived to be a liberty either of individuals or of local jurisdictions. The latter critics seem too doctrinaire to deserve rebuttal, yet their line of reasoning has long supplied the former with an idealistic argument to mask their true intent.

The Federal Wage and Hour Act represented a translation into law of a belief that has long been gaining ground. The state curtails man's liberty to kill himself or to sell himself into slavery; now it curtails his liberty to sell his labor at less than a minimum wage, and it curtails his liberty to employ others at less than such a wage. In yet another realm the state withdraws from doctrinaire libertarianism. Would this additional withdrawal stand a court test, or would it like previous similar attempts be found unconstitutional?

The Supreme Court has given its answer in a unanimous decision, upholding the Act and defining the power of Congress under the commerce clause of the Constitution perhaps more broadly than it has ever explicitly done before. "It extends to those activities intrastate which so affect interstate commerce or the exercise of the power of Congress over it as to make regulation of them appropriate means to the attainment of a legitimate end, the exercise of the granted power of Congress to regulate interstate commerce." This opens the door to federal child labor laws, to all sorts of curtailment of individual liberty in the

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public interest. Given the organization of modern society, this is inevitable. This power, necessary in our kind of society, can be abused if the people permit it to be abused. But if properly exercised, it can be good, and make possible a freedom for individuals which more doctrinaire notions of liberty have long denied.

Birth Control and the Census

AS EACH YEAR rolls along its course, it becomes necessary for the Catholic commentator to note at certain calendar points the meetings, resolutions and so forth of birth control groups. They do not vary much from year to year, and the current example, the meeting of the Birth Control Federation of America, runs true to form; its speeches promising a rise in civic quality through the improvement of "human material at its source," its data retailing the twelve-month increase in the use of contraceptives throughout the country, and its resolutions looking toward a day just around the corner when, the wrong people having been taught how not to have children, the right people will be encouraged (of course with complete success, as all related evidence shows) to have them. However, there *is* a change this year, external to the designs of the Federation but furnishing a very adequate commentary on them. The government analysis of population age-levels is out, having made the headlines, by a neat accident, just as the birth-controllers were gathering for their annual luncheon. Among a great number of vitally interesting facts, it relates that in the last decade the number of those in this country over sixty-five rose by an absolute figure of over 2 millions, a 35 percent increase, while the number of those under five declined by close to a million, a 7 percent drop; that, in summary, "the decreasing birth-rate and improving mortality conditions" have raised the median figure of our population two and one-half years—from 26.4 to 28.9—in a single decade.

An Older America

There are many answers, on many levels, to those who, with a mixture of ingenuousness and moral insensibility, would meet human difficulties by artificially cutting off the human stream. There is, first of all, the spiritual answer: that life is, in its origin, its destiny and its quality, an incomparable gift. There is the moral and psychological answer: granted that a family must take ill-health or poverty into account, it is intrinsically wrong to misuse the generative function instead of using the control proper to human beings; and in practical fact, this wrongness tends to vitiate the wholesomeness and destroy the happiness of marriage. There is the medical and scientific answer: that contraceptives frequently injure health, and that, with a few exceptions universally admitted, we do not actually know enough about the human stock to determine who shall not have children. There is the answer of sound sociology: if society has created a civilization unfavorable to humanity, create a new civilization, do not decreate humanity. And finally, as the figures at hand show with grim cogency, there is the answer of economics. On this showing, census authorities predict a population decline of 4 percent a generation from now on. What is to equalize the effect of this steady shrinkage upon our economic substructure, that complex organization to provide what living beings need, from which all income, all material security, derives? And as the life-span increases under the ironic benignity of medical science, and decent standards of old-age care are more widely adopted, what is to redress for those who bear the burden of paying, the slow, fateful tipping of the scale toward the age levels which can pay no longer?

Forum

MR. WILLIAM M. AGAR has done yeoman's work in trying to convince us that England's war is our war and that Americans must "see this thing through." I do not agree with Mr. Agar; and I do not think the vast majority of the American people agree with Mr. Agar.

This war is Britain's war. It is not our war. It seems to me that Mr. Agar does not sufficiently appreciate this elementary fact.

The United States is under no obligation, moral or otherwise, to enter this war. We should stay out—regardless of what happens in Europe. If a British victory depended solely upon America's entry into the conflict, we should stay out. If Hitler's triumph in Europe could only be averted by our entry into the war, we should stay out. Under any and all circumstances, we should stay out of Europe's wars.

There is a current tendency to confuse Britain's imperialistic loot with Christianity, democracy and freedom. Let us be perfectly honest about this. Britain is not a Christian country. It is not a democracy. Britain loves freedom—for the British.

At the end of World War I, Britain added to her imperialistic loot. Will she do so again at the end of World War II? In the past, Britain shamefully oppressed and exploited millions of human beings in her far-flung Empire. Will she continue to do so at the end of World War II? I should like to have some assurance on these points.

Mr. Agar assumes that America's entry into the European conflict will mean victory. Will it? It may, conceivably, mean defeat. What then?

I do not think Mr. Agar has sufficiently estimated the appalling cost of America's participa-

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tion in the war. It will put an end to our own democracy, and may involve the total wreckage of our entire social, political, economic and financial order. What then?

Senator Wheeler, Lindbergh, Kennedy and Castle are severely criticized because they do not favor a further extension of the war. I believe that it should be the primary business of Americans to seek ways and means of ending the war as quickly and speedily as possible rather than of trying to whip up a war hysteria that can have only one result—war and more war.

JOHN J. O'CONNOR.

ONE OF THE FACTORS that adds to the confusion in current discussions of the lend-lease bill and the controversy between interventionists and isolationists is the tendency of each proponent to present his case as a simple, black or white proposition. Complexities of the present situation are sharply brushed aside in the effort to focus attention on certain elements which lead directly to each advocate's conclusion. I should find either of these persuasions more convincing if the line of argument did not leave out a number of essential factors. These comments, I realize, will be displeasing to both contenders.

To the interventionists, for instance, Hitler's power and potentialities for further evil are so great as to overweigh all other considerations. Time and again they bring forward the argument that Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg and others once thought they were free from danger in much the same way many Americans think of the security of their own position today. The force of this implication is considerably weakened by insistence on the inability of military forces attacking from great distances successfully to invade a reasonably prepared major power such as the United States. Most interventionists appear to ignore or evade this well-attested contention; there is constant repetition of the fear motif by spokesmen for the administration, the newspapers, the movies.

Another disturbing characteristic of the pronouncements of this group is the vagueness of their immediate aims. What definite measures do they propose as effectives that give reasonable assurance of compassing the downfall of Hitler and what do they propose to do to insure the world against another worldwide holocaust a few years hence? In their zeal to accomplish the downfall of Hitler they fail to say how it is to be done or what is to take the place of the irresponsibility and instability of the '30's.

It is not always easy to see what is transpiring beyond the headlines from day to day. But there is evidence that a considerable portion of the American metropolitan press, with a few notable exceptions, such as the Chicago *Tribune* and the New York *Daily News,* are playing an important rôle in the whipping up of a war fervor among the American people. Millions scarcely read more than leading headlines, and the distorted impression given by the headlines in characterizing Colonel Lindbergh's testimony and the attitude toward America in Hitler's most recent speech was little short of outright falsification. Journals also which this fall were violently declaiming editorially against the "dictatorial ambition of the third term candidate" are now falling all over each other in their haste to win supporters for the lend-lease bill. The connection of this bill with outright intervention is coolly indicated in the current *Business Week,* which attempts to give the real lowdown to American business executives, commenting on congressional amendments to H.R. 1776: "By the time government policy could be extended to convoying merchant ships, there would probably be a congressional majority in favor of war anyway."

The extension of the war to the United States, and in consequence to other parts of the world, seems to me to be the wrong way to combat Hitlerism for several reasons. To begin with it would sharply expand the area of destruction—of homes and families, cultures and economies, livelihoods and social institutions, countless human lives. It would do this without affording adequate assurance that a decent way of life for the peoples involved would be the actual result; chaos would more inevitably be the outcome. The cost of a successful march on Berlin would be incalculable. What assurance is there that the evils of Hitlerism would thereby be stopped, that peace with justice would result?

The interventionists have not adequately defined their views as to the evils of Hitlerism and the character of the totalitarian revolution, but I fully share their belief that Hitlerism is evil. What prevents me from getting on the band wagon (and it is a very comfortable vehicle right now) is the persistence of several important loopholes in their story. Their principal argument as to American vulnerability does not tally with convincing military testimony. They do not present a convincing plan for America's rôle, in compassing the defeat of Hitlerism nor do they tell us where such aggressors as Russia or Japan fit into the picture. They present no program for a just and enduring peace. For them, to recognize the principal public enemy seems to shut out all other considerations.

On the other hand, I have even less sympathy for the view that the war in Europe is no direct concern of ours. The effort to focus attention, for instance, on past and present evils in the British Empire with the resultant blinding of oneself to the Hitler menace to the people of Europe and many other parts of the world is to my mind the

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Mount Melleray, Ireland

A leading writer of Dublin remembers a bicycle trip and a visit to the Cistercian Monastery.

By **Winifred M. Letts**

"GO to Mount Melleray," she said. "You'll neither forget it nor regret it." This may have been the time when the "Garden of Allah" had turned our thoughts wistfully towards monasteries; I can only remember that the word "Trappist" filled me with a sense of wonder. As we climbed the long hills, pushing our bicycles, my cousin and I, we pictured silent figures flitting about among cloisters and transepts or digging their own graves in the twilight. The War we then called "Great" was yet undreamed; we were young, the month was June, we had very little money but strong muscles and joyful hearts. Our few garments were packed in American cloth bags strapped to our bicycles.

Indeed, so shabby were we that when I asked a kindly constable to advise me of a respectable hotel in New Ross he sent us to a place where the charges were small and the fleas many. "We had the Fair people here last night," said our hostess. "Maybe you won't mind that?" We said, "Oh! No," quite blithely, not grasping what the Fair produces. But we spent the night in mackintoshes sitting on a horse-hair sofa.

To Agnes, my cousin, I said firmly: "Only the *best* hotels will do for me."

"But you haven't the money," she replied with her own notable good sense.

We were climbing the hill from Cappoquin up . . . up . . . up into the Knockmealdown Mountains where Mount Melleray lies in the heathery world of larks and grouse. When we stopped to rest, as one must do with a bicycle, to the spirit's much advantage, we looked back on the valley of the Blackwater, intoned in every note of green. Great cumulus clouds lifted peaks and avalanches against the blue. "I'm sure Melleray will be clean," I said hopefully, "and we can wash properly."

I was mindful that my cousin had, with a generous gesture, treated me to a shilling bath in Glenmalure, the only hotel where we had met a bathroom.

Suddenly, as it seemed, we were at the monastery gates and close to a house which we discovered was the women's hostel. We found out that we could lodge here for a shilling a night and that we should get our meals at the monastery. For our entertainment there was no charge. We could, if we wished, make an offering.

It was about the time of the mid-day meal and our fellow guests were starting for the refectory. They looked at us kindly and offered their guidance. I remember best Mrs. O'Hare whose son was a novice, old Miss Dowd who was his aunt and Miss Mulherne, "a returned Yank," full of laughter and talk, but in need, so her elders seemed to think, of spiritual counsel. Confession was urged upon her frequently by her friends.

We streeled along the avenue to the guest house and there we met Brother Pat. To many people the name Brother Pat will always be loved and venerated. He has a shrine in my memory and I would decorate it with rosemary and heartsease for he is a man to have known. In a moment my picture of a lantern jawed, cowled and silent figure vanished, for we were being welcomed by a kindly monk with a laugh in his eyes and quick friendly speech. He was radiant with life. He asked us at once for news of Dublin. "Tell me," he said, "what is going on? Are there good plays? Is there good music? When I was there, I wanted to hear and see everything. Why should you miss what's good? Now I'll tell you a thing I loved—to go out to Howth on a summer's evening, sitting on the top of the tram. Ah! that was life . . . and still I found better." He turned to attend to our wants. We were given most excellent Melleray mutton, the best of vegetables, butter as yellow and sweet as cowslips, milk creamy and cool.

I had expected to eat to the sound of some religious book as once I had supped porridge to saints' lives in my austere school days of Lent. But no. There was the liveliest talk. Miss Mulherne was quick with her sallies but always Brother Pat had the last gay words. Quick as tennis balls the jokes flew until the meal was over, and then he offered to show us such few parts of the monastery as female eyes might see. I cannot now remember what we saw, for my lively recollection is of Brother Pat surrounded by this little flock of women and his sudden turn to a serious note. It always came, I noticed, when he parted from us.

"Don't forget," he said, "that we've got to reach Heaven. Hoppin' or throttin' we must reach Heaven in the heel o' the hunt. We've got to get the laugh of the Devil. He'll be shovelling coals below and we'll have the laugh of him."

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Off we wandered to roam that lovely country. Mrs. O'Hare was by my side. We knew that her husband had a shop in Cork.

"Did I tell you, dear, my son is a novice?" she asked, and went on, full of her thoughts: "'Tis wonderful surely the grace of God. Every day I see Chris—I mean Bernard . . . he's that in religion, I do ask him what he had for his dinner. An' he wouldn't scarcely know. At home he'd be so fiddy-faddy and great on toffee he always was, caramels—his cheek would be bulging any time you'd speak to him. Didn't I send him some for Easter an' he never got them. . . . I suppose it wouldn't be right for a novice to suck caramels, an' he laughed when I told him what he'd missed. The grace of God is wonderful! An' he'll be up at three in the morning a lad you'd never get down to his breakfast at eight."

I thought how Brother Pat had been up since two o'clock, sung the long office and been gay as a lark at noon.

At some time I learned all that I seem to recall of Brother Pat's story. He had been barman in a certain hostelry in Dublin near the Theatre Royal. He was, mind you, an unusual barman, for he studied logic and he had told us how he loved opera music. At forty he had left behind the secular life and gone to Melleray, living with the same urge and gaiety in this other realm.

I have a rather vague but colored memory of helping our companions over stone walls, of the flashing of white stockings and red flannel petticoats, things now extinct. Behind the lovely summer pattern of flowering elder, buttercups, wind-purpled grasses and the folded blue curves of the mountains there lay that questing urge of the soul in all these people: "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills. From whence cometh my help? My help cometh even from the Lord Who made Heaven and earth."

Each looked beyond this lovely world wistfully. Miss O'Dowd, insisting, not unkindly, on our out-of-the-fold faith, was confident of our security. "'Tis what I say—we'll all meet in Heaven. If you're born a Protestant . . . there it is, but we'll meet in Heaven."

When we went to chapel for evening devotions Miss O'Dowd took me under her wing, literally under her elbow. A dig in the ribs was followed by : "Looka! the little chap over there . . . he's a saint. 'Tis marvelous he is."

The boys of the boarding school had come to their places. Of the brethren we saw nothing from our benches behind the chancel screen. We heard only the rough, strong voices. At that time neither the church nor the music of Melleray were impressive. But I write of the past.

During our walks I seem to recall a voice telling us the story of this foundation. It comes to me now like a dream voice speaking over the years.

> When the monks were expelled from Melleray in France four of them came to Cork. There one turned back but the three made their ways to this spot in the Knockmeal-down mountains, the property of the Keane family. It was towards evening and they were very weary. Their leader, Brother Vincent, had a shilling and sixpence in his pocket. A poor woman of the roads, a homeless creature, seeing the three men begged of them. Brother Vincent turned to his companions. "Would Our Lord give her the money?" he asked.
>
> "Yes," they answered.
>
> "Take it in God's name," he said.
>
> So they were left with night coming and no food. But there were cottage women not far off and they brought potatoes and buttermilk to the monks. And their men came and put up a shed for the night. The priest of that parish brought forty of his people to make a stronger shelter. And the head of the Keane family gave them what land they could till, though it was the heathery mountainside then.

At these words I looked where the monastic buildings lay below us, durable and spreading far. The cattle were walking to the byre to be milked by the newest electrical machinery. The pig yard was gay with pink bonhams chasing each other. Everywhere was the pattern of tillage, field by field, reclaimed from the rebel heather.

> It was a great place they had by 1846 (the voice went on), the richest of vestments and silver plate and a great organ, for people would give them offerings. And then the famine came. What could they do but sell all they had for the starving? There were days when they gave the last handful of flour from the bin and still it would be full when they'd come again. All they could give they gave and it's not forgotten to them. There's a blessing on the place. . . . Such cattle, such tillage! It's the best farm anywhere. The Brothers must all do some farm work. You'll meet them in the morning coming back with their spades. And every Brother washes his own white habit, the Abbot and all must stand at the wash tub.

It was one evening while we strolled in the glow of late sunshine that a jaunting car approached the monastery gates. The traveler swayed uneasily on his seat.

"Maybe it's a drunk," suggested Miss O'Dowd. "Did ye not know they've a great drink cure here? Indeed they have . . . not too sudden. They'd give you a sup each day till ye'll break the wish. My God! but a drunken man's a great fright. The like o' that man looks a case."

Then tall pale Miss Redmond, the dressmaker, began to talk. She had seemed to live only in passionate prayer in the church, now she was moved to hasty speech in the Dublin accent.

"I knew a man," she said, "he's a rich man an' a Protestant, but he'd a great wish for the Brothers. He agreed to take a cure for the drink because he's a terror for it. But the Brothers would notice the sniff of the whiskey off him when he came in. They wondered where to God he'd get it with the high walls and no pub in miles. He never let on till one day he came back just on a visit. Says he: 'I'll tell you I tricked you all, for I made a windlass on the wall and I got a man

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out of Cappoquin to put the bottle in for me when he'd be passing. I got my sup and there'd soon be an empty bottle. Well, it was the bottles I wanted to hide on you. An' what did I do but put them all inside the statue of Saint Joseph there? He's got a hole in his back an' if you look inside you will find whiskey bottles."

Miss Mulherne shrieked with laughter. "Wasn't that great gas?" she cried, "Believe you me that lad was the right old fox."

The monastery was closed and abed by eight o'clock on those long June evenings, but we of the hostel could stand outside in a dusk that smelt of flowering grasses and elder blossom.

We two companions had to leave the next day and I asked Mrs. O'Hare how much we should give for our excellent fare at the guest house.

"An offering, dear," she said, "whatever you like. You'll have to chase Brother Pat to give it to him. He'll not be looking for it. I'll tell you a true tale. There was an Australian, if I have it right, heard how they'd keep a man a fortnight and no word of pay. So he came an' he stayed and enjoyed it and there was never a word of money first day or last. Off he went and never left a half-penny. So he boasted to his friends the free holiday he got. 'But,' says they, 'go back an' you'll not be so welcome.'

"So back he went to try them and he got the right welcome an' he stays two weeks again and leaves with a blessing and not a penny passed. Off he went to Australia and the next they heard of him he died out there."

"How mean!" I exclaimed.

"Wait, dear," with uplifted finger, "till you hear. He'd made a will and left the monastery forty thousand." So the story comes to me, a little vaguely over the years.

But the sunny memory remains—Brother Pat, with his vigorous speech and his smile, his "nothing seemed worth-while in the world, nothing lasted me, all changed. There's something lasting here."

Melleray was a place not of dreams and phantoms but of practical farmers, of country people coming to Mass and to a good breakfast of homely fare, of school children busy and merry, of visitors in their motor cars pausing for a meal in this hostelry of Heaven. Melleray is a center of life and of agriculture but it remembers all day and early, when you and I are asleep, that this world is "but an outer court of Eternity."

New York City Selects for Service

The efficiency of the dictatorships is more than matched by democratic action in the big city.

By **Bertha Anne Peet**

EVEN THOSE who have the deepest faith in the survival of democracy occasionally pause in reluctant admiration before the efficiency of the totalitarian machine. Most totalitarian projects seem to run with diabolical smoothness while, in our desperate efforts to get a preparedness program under way in the shortest time, we often feel that by the very nature of our democratic form of government, our hands are helplessly tied with red tape.

But actually without friction, without theatrics, in the shortest possible time, a job of organization and administration stupendous enough to give pause even to the totalitarian countries was accomplished in New York City as part of the nation-wide plan for putting selective service into effect. That was the registration in one day of over a million men. This was accomplished with an original staff of sixty persons, to which were added 53,000 volunteers drawn from all branches of the municipal government. There was no disruption of city life, no disturbance except in one instance when two registrants each claimed the privilege of being the first in line, no congestion at the registration places. And all this in spite of the fact that the problems of administering selective service in New York City were so mountainous that it alone, of all the cities in the United States, was permitted to have an organization of its own, separate from the state.

The boss is no "fuehrer"

The man who is responsible for this organization from its inception does not have any of the characteristics of a dictator. He is Colonel Arthur V. McDermott, a quiet spoken, humorous, effective American. That there are others like him in this country can well give us hope for the survival of democracy. With his executive assistant director, Major William J. Walsh, Colonel McDermott is the man who filled the "blank pages" which were left for New York City when national plans for selective service were being made. His preparation for the playing of so successful a rôle

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goes back to his solid education and his legal and municipal experience. More specifically, Colonel McDermott, as Judge Advocate General of the New York State National Guard, has worked on plans for national defense for the last five years, in conjunction with the Joint Army and Navy Selective Service Committee. As First Deputy Comptroller of the City of New York, he was able to make use of existing municipal machinery in order to obtain the cooperation of the 53,000 volunteers on Registration Day.

Colonel McDermott's family settled in this country in 1840 and with his wife, Genevieve Markey, he still lives in the same house in Brooklyn where the first McDermotts established themselves. He went to St. Francis Xavier High School, and attended Columbia College. Before enrolling in New York Law School, he worked his way West to find out what the rest of America was like. He didn't make his fortune, only enough to buy a ticket back home, but he had had a wealth of experience, learning about different kinds of work and people. This was added to through the years when in private law practice, as Regimental Operations Officer with the 106th Infantry during the last World War, when he was severely wounded, and awarded the British Military Cross for gallantry in action in the break-through of the Hindenburg Line, and later as First Deputy Comptroller of the City of New York, he increased his knowledge of men and their behavior. In New York City's Selective Service Administration, this had its fruition.

The day's work

Although the subsequent work of the Selective Service Administration for New York City has followed the efficient pattern of Registration Day, because of what was then accomplished, it is to Wednesday, October 16th, that we must look back for an answer to the question, "Can a democracy prepare as efficiently for defense as a dictatorship for aggression?" The total registration on that day was 1,001,375 and it was conducted by 3,912 registration boards, practically all of which had compiled their registrations at the closing hour of 9 P.M.

The last board closed at 9:20 P.M. and the first truckload of registration cards was delivered by the police at the 71st Regiment Armory, the city-wide collection and distribution point, at 10:03 P.M. The tabulated police report of the total number of registrations, which proved to be remarkably close to the official count, was received at 11:30 P.M. and transmitted to State headquarters at Albany. The final delivery of registration cards at the armory was made at 2:45 A.M. and the last registration card was assigned to its respective local board at 1:20 A.M. Thursday morning. The tabulated count of the number of registrants in each local board was compiled at 6:32 A.M. and a telegraphic report was sent to State headquarters at once. Distribution of the registration cards to the offices of the 280 local boards was completed at 4:30 P.M. on Friday afternoon. The first board, No. 1, of Manhattan, was sworn in and began its work at 1 P.M. on Friday.

In addition to the 53,000 city employees there were approximately 2,453 volunteer workers assigned to the five borough headquarters, including 1,453 interpreters with a command of 36 languages and dialects.

Thirty trunk telephone lines and ten auxiliary lines were installed at central headquarters for the emergency, and the incoming messages and inquiries reached a peak of 700 calls an hour. A force of 60 volunteers manned the telephones from 5:00 A.M. until the registration was completed.

Radio receiving sets were installed in each of the 712 public schools where registration took place, with an attendant for each, and instructions and bulletins were broadcast direct from headquarters over the municipal broadcasting station, WNYC. The effectiveness of this plan was demonstrated at the outset. At about 5:40 A.M. numerous calls began to come from various registration boards to the effect that all of the members had not yet reported and that consequently they could not elect a chief registrar.

These calls increased in such volume during the next three minutes that instruction were broadcast to elect a chief registrar from among those then present. Within half a minute the inquiries ceased.

Throughout the day a force of inspectors in motor cars toured all parts of the city and telephoned to headquarters whenever they found long waiting lines, and whenever emergency calls were received from them or from the school principals, a group of from five to twenty firemen were immediately dispatched to serve as additional registrars until the congestion was relieved.

All channels, newspapers, magazines, radio, posters, speakers, for informing and conditioning the public to cooperate smoothly in registration were serviced by the Public Information Division. Releases up to five a day were prepared for 18 metropolitan dailies covering the five boroughs, 20 weeklies which included community papers, 13 press associations, 62 foreign language publications, in addition to civic, fraternal and hotel magazines. Sixteen organizations of large membership covering a variety of fields heard speakers on selective service and 23 radio talks were given, exclusive of the spot announcements carried four or six times a day by 17 radio stations for one week preceding registration. Two hundred and eighty thousand copies of the blow-up of the registration card were posted in a quarter of a million

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business and public places in forty-eight hours. Ten days before registration, 20,000 copies of the President's Proclamation were posted in the headquarters of all organizations in the five boroughs.

Facts and figures, these, which prove that the intelligent, thoughtful American, of whom Colonel McDermott might almost be said to be the type, has not lost his touch. They show that our native ability to get things done, whether it is building a railroad across a continent, organizing a million dollar business, or effecting a peacetime program for national defense, can match any contrivance of those abroad who seek to destroy our democratic institutions.

Picasso and Ourselves

An instinct for universal responsibility, a will for universal participation seems lacking to our day.

By **M. A. Couturier**

THE COMMONWEAL asks me to review the fine "Picasso" by Jean Cassou recently published by the Hyperion Press.* But is there really the least interest in doing so? Among the laymen and clergy, constant readers of this Catholic magazine, are there really some who are seriously interested in the work and thought of this painter, Pablo Picasso? And of such how many are there? Let us simply grant that they are surely a tiny minority, utterly without importance.

But what is perhaps not without importance is that those priests and those Catholics should constitute such a tiny minority. For that fact leads to several conclusions which indeed are of a nature to interest even the majority itself. So, in connection with the most celebrated of living painters, I shall state those conclusions. I shall do it as objectively as possible, limiting myself to matters of fact, well known to everyone.

First conclusion: certainly one of the tragic aspects of the Catholic community of our times has been its ignorance, its disregard of such problems as were not directly and specifically religious, and thereby of the pains, the dreams, the victories of everything which was not specifically Christian. So much was this the case that His Holiness Pius XI had to institute a feast of Christ the King to call attention to the fact that Christ's kingdom—and love—in truth extend far beyond the domain over which ecclesiastical authorities can effectively exercise their governance. Therefore in the manner in which our public opinion and our religious press speak of the work and thought of non-believers there is often a flippancy, a lack of respect for the work of others and, basically, an ignorance of the problems involved which is truly regrettable. Of course, no man can know everything, but there is also a certain properly "Catholic" attitude of mind which one should assume precisely with regard to the things one does not know, or that one knows ill.

Among the things unknown to our Catholic world is surely all that which relates to the development of the arts in the modern world. Whence it happens that if you speak to priests, to lay people, even to those who think themselves "cultivated," of that immense change which has taken place in the arts during the last half-century, it will be surprising if they are in a position even to suspect how interesting is that change, if even they have heard about it. In vain can such unusual works as those of Cezanne and Van Gogh, Matisse and Bonnard, Braque and Picasso, despite their strangeness, constitute all over the world the glory of the finest private collections and of the greatest museums—that means nothing to us. It arouses in us I shall not say the least disquiet, but not even merely the least curiosity.

Artistic changes

In vain has artistic life for fifty years, and indeed the greatest artists—in vain has it suffered the most serious disintegration: not only the separation of artists from the general mass of the public, but also, in the works of art themselves, dissociation of plastic elements and of representative elements from the world of reality; and

* The "Picasso" published in New York by the Hyperion Press ($4.00) is a fine bound volume, 10 by 12 inches in size, containing a long preface by Jean Cassou and 160 large reproductions in black and white or in full color. The essence of Picasso's work is contained therein; yet it would seem that for his strictly cubist period, among others, it would have been possible to select specimens of rarer quality. Then, too, his sculpture is omitted, of which certain examples (the metallic statues, for instance) are extremely significant. And of course there is lacking that which alone can give direct contact with paintings in which the absence of representative interest gives a greater importance to the material of the picture, for instance the quality and the handling of the paint. Such pictures are *objects* fashioned from canvas and oil paint, as vases are fashioned out of clay or bronze. And all that, no photograph, however good, can reveal. Cassou's preface is excellent; not technical, but of such a sort as to provoke reflection and to cause the public to share in the great problems proposed and so often strangely resolved by Picasso and his friends.

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finally, in artistic activity itself, total withdrawal of the creative imagination from the control of the intelligence, with all the disruptions that this was to provoke. In vain have several of the greatest artists of our times risked in these changes not only their most precious talents but even their reason for living (and cases of insanity and of suicide have not been rare in *avant-garde* circles). Despite all this, Catholic opinion, Catholic thought seems not even to have heard tell of what was going on, or, when it did know something of it, saw therein only snobbery, foolish antics, or the machinations of Jewish art dealers and critics.

Picasso's better fortune

To revert to Picasso: we must admit that in this immense indifference he, at least, has had better luck. Almost every ecclesiastic has heard of him. But here again we must make no mistake about the quality of this notoriety; it arises purely from scandal. Fifty years ago a police officer, in order to protect it against popular fury, had to mount guard before "Olympia," a painting now hanging in the Louvre, and Degas wrote to Manet: "You are as famous as Garibaldi . . ." The same is true today of Picasso: people have looked because they were scandalized—scandalized, but not at all interested by the problems set by such works.

Jean Cassou can well point out, in his admirable preface, that Picasso's "name arouses echoes of enthusiasm or abuse in the entire universe. No one remains indifferent to him. The whole world responds." Neither our press nor our Catholic opinion is aware that there can then be a question, that here is something to be taken seriously.

Well, it seems to me that that is too bad, and that this absence of *interest* on the part of our "cultivated" Catholic circles has a bad appearance: scorn for things one does not understand is never a good sign. Even for a Catholic: above all, rather, for a Catholic. I should like to make myself clear on that point.

But first of all I should like to set limits to the discussion. In the first place, it is certain that our neglect in this field does not in itself compromise the general culture of Catholic society: the world of art is a world sufficiently set apart wherein events do not necessarily have their origin or their effect on other provinces of intellectual life. Moreover, it is certain that this artistic ignorance in Catholic circles is only one of the effects of the more and more radical separation which, for a hundred years, has been drawing apart the general public and the greatest artists. And it is no more than fair to point out that this separation does not come merely from a growing indifference of the public for the works of the spirit, nor even from the general tendency of thought and custom which draws us in the direction of a growing specialization in our various spheres, but that it comes in very large measure from the artists themselves and from the inherent and often disconcerting qualities of their work. And in particular it comes from Picasso and from his friends whose labors have led contemporary art into paths where it was idle to think that the "public" could ever follow.

So I shall not for an instant suggest that all is lost because the bishops have neglected to ask the Pope to honor Picasso with the cross of a Knight Commander of St. Gregory the Great. It would have been a charming thing to have done, but that is not the point. The person and the work of Picasso count for very little in the discussion, and I should even willingly grant that they rather constitute a difficulty.

The true question is this: should we lightheartedly take for granted that the Church, or, if you prefer, that cultivated circles in the Church should have remained entirely ignorant of a long crisis wherein, from generation to generation, the *greatest* artists time and again questioned the fundamental principles of the arts?

I should reply that here, in any case, is a *new phenomenon* in the history of Catholicism: that Catholicism should have remained entirely a stranger to artistic events of such importance—that is a thing never seen before. In all great periods the Church had been, through its inspiration and patronage, at the forefront of artistic movements. But here we find her for a hundred years altogether in the opposite position. You will have to grant that it is difficult to interpret this retrograde motion as progress. Be it said in passing that all one needs to point out, moreover, are the happy results which this has produced in our contemporary churches and the mediocrity of almost everything which we have caused to be built, painted or carved in the last hundred years—that is all one needs to point out to be convinced of the immediate interest inherent in this phenomenon. But that is only an aside. Let us come back to the main question. There is, then, a new phenomenon; is that phenomenon *serious?* At least as a *symptom,* for it is clear that, for the clergy above all, the realm of art normally remains a realm of secondary interest? My own answer would be yes, and I shall thus justify it. I shall say that our neglect in this field (admittedly secondary) is serious not so much because it indicates the abandonment of a field, a backward movement of Catholic culture, but above all because it appears as *symptomatic* of a negative state of mind which is absolutely contrary to the essential requirements of Catholic thought and culture as such. This neglect would then lead us to think that, by the fact of this deviation from the Catholic spirit, other neglects can and must have produced themselves in other, more important realms.

Let us be more precise: when I speak of require-

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ments, I have in mind that law, essential to Catholic thought as such, which requires of that thought that it should know itself, should *feel* itself, by vocation engaged, "interested" in all human thought, in every human problem. A Catholic culture, a Catholic intellectual life which no longer feels this already is not possessed of the fullness of its vocation or of its life. Catholic thought, because it is "catholic," cannot take for granted that certain realms of the intellect should for it be closed worlds, for it is precisely its mission to live in symbiosis, in communion with all the life of the whole world. Father Lacordaire used to say that a Catholic "is a man who has been willing to take upon himself responsibility for all men." A Catholic thought which does not retain its taste for—which in a sense does not take under its charge—all human thought, every human problem, is already no longer, in its very life, sufficiently catholic; Catholic thought is not defined merely by its objects, but rather by a positive attitude, by that instinct for universal responsibility, that will for universal participation.

A sign of warning

Our long neglect in the field of contemporary art should then have for us the value and the seriousness of a sign, of a warning. And, if you will, of a calling us back to what we should be. For this reason it has been useful to speak of it.

* * *

In his admirable preface, Jean Cassou applies to the work and life of Picasso the title of the last, unfinished poem of Gongora: "Soledades." Solitudes . . . Of this spiritual solitude wherein the great independent artists have thought and worked, and which is bad for them, Catholic thought has known nothing. Their interior wilderness has in part been created, then, by our absence: We had not the right to be absent . . . If we had been present, this tormented and cruel world of modern art would have been different. It would have been a gain for both sides.

We have had all the excuses I have described: the things which we should have defended were difficult to love, and we all of us had so many other things on our minds. Yet the regrets remain. And there is mingled with them the fears which I have expressed: I do not know whether the neglect, hereby verified in a secondary sphere, was not produced elsewhere as well. And it is not up to me to say whether this is true or not. In any case one rule is imposed on all of us: we do not know everything; we have many things to learn. We must be modest the minute we enter into these realms of the spirit where there is ever going on such mysterious exchanges and where often one can give nothing if one has not first of all agreed to receive a great deal.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

NOTHING has so cheered and strengthened the writer of these weekly jottings—which of late have more than ever deserved that rather lightweight caption, as he has been commuting, so to speak, between New York and Windsor, Ontario, via Detroit—as the response, and the character of that response, to a letter addressed by a small group of citizens to a much larger group, given below. Because of its special and obvious bearing upon the present situation and the future prospects of Catholicism in the United States, this letter deserves wider publicity than it is likely to achieve either in our diocesan press or the secular press. It runs as follows—

January 31, 1941.

Senator George, Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee,
United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator George: We, the undersigned citizens of the United States, desire you to bring the views and recommendations contained in this joint letter to the attention and consideration of your Committee.

We all subscribe to the doctrine and discipline of one or another of the various religious organizations of which we individually are members, but we do not officially represent any such organizations in this communication. We believe, however, that the spiritual principles and unchanging moral laws which we in common with the great majority of our fellow citizens hold as a precious heritage from our ancestors, which we hope and intend to transmit unimpaired to our children's children, should be openly proclaimed and as openly made the motivating power of our national policies relating to the war in Europe which threatens our own security, and very probably our own religious and civic liberties.

What we confess on this fundamental point of the American way of life has been as openly and as strongly upheld by all our Governments through their Chief Executives when occasion arose for such proclamation; and their consequent practical applications, from George Washington through Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, with the common consent, indeed with the common urging, of our people as being the very fundamentals of our nation's religious and civic liberties.

Again let us emphasize that we do not act officially, or as the delegated spokesmen for our various churches or synagogues. We act as individual citizens when we jointly request your Committee to take notice of and give consideration to our conviction that the Lend-Lease Bill now being considered by your Committee, and soon to go before your whole honorable body of the Senate and of the House of Representatives for adequate debate and consequent action, should be promptly passed substantially in its present form, and as promptly enacted into law to the end that the national policy of defending our spiritual, moral and material interests shall be given adequate instruments.

That such defence of our national interests is most adequately carried on at present by the fullest possible ald to Great Britain and her allies is recognized by us in common with the great majority of our fellow citizens. As a long step in the right direction, we close by again urging speedy and unanimous passage and enactment of the Lend-Lease Bill.

May I strongly urge those of my readers to act who agree with those who already have signed? They include

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many Catholic ecclesiastics—from highly placed representatives of many religious orders and congregations, and of the secular clergy (what a misleading way of referring to the great and valiant body of the clergy who make up the main army of the Church!). There is also a host of highly placed laymen and laywomen in many professional and educational posts; and many who are the valiant representatives of the rank and file of the laity.

One letter passed on to me to hand over, with numerous other names, to Senator George in Washington, where I am writing my column this week, bore the names of what must be the entire staff of a very notable educational establishment directed by the members of an order famous for seven hundred years for its theological and philosophical and preaching mission in the Church, the Order of Preachers, the Dominicans, "the hounds of the Lord." The list as a whole will be an inspiring and widespread cross-section of the spiritual, intellectual, professional and mass strength of American Catholics. It will be placed on public record when the hour comes to file the petition and its signatures with Senator George and his colleagues. It will be read with singular interest—and with curious comments, no doubt—in the editorial office of the Brooklyn *Tablet*, and sundry other organs of a similar equivocal type; and by the now quiet Voice of Royal Oak Park, Detroit, Michigan, of the Shrine of the Little Flower.

I visited that shrine last Sunday, by the way, to ask Father Coughlin to debate with me, with results which will make interesting reading soon. There is a fine image of Saint Theresa near the radio church. As I knelt before it, I wondered what results will follow the arrival in our country of a letter from the Prioress of the Carmelites of Lisieux, asking if prayers could not be offered up by clients of her sainted sister that the famous preacher of Royal Oak Park might grow more kind toward France, the land that produced, humanly speaking, that unique bloom of heroic, steel-willed sanctity. The spiritual atmosphere of a land capable of such growths—and what a vast harvest France has produced, even in the latter days of her spiritual decline!—is too strong to permit of the friends of France doubting that France will rise again.

Forum

(*Continued from page* 414)

worst of current oversimplifications. By the very fact of fighting for her life, Britain is incidentally keeping alive in Europe the hope of ultimate resistance to a totalitarian threat against almost all that makes life worth living. Past crimes of the English and their present deficiencies cannot alter that fact.

Even on the assumption that the United States and the other Americas could together build up a Western Hemisphere which would operate as a just, exemplary, harmonious and powerful political and economic unit, there would still remain the question of our duties to the other peoples of the world. It is the peoples of Europe who have the greatest claim on us, for from the heart of Christendom America obtained the ideals, institutions, science, art, traditions of scholarship, the heritage of centuries.

It would be utterly abhorrent to reject these international responsibilities and abandon our fellow-humans to Hitlerization. On the other hand, to extend the war, to bring about a general chaos which would be resolved either by the Russian form of tyranny or the present trend to ruthless, petty dictatorships would provide no solution either. We must take action in a constructive direction, for Christians cannot go on living in comparative comfort in a world of persecution and suffering.

Europe's sorrows are in a sense our own. Several obligations stand out clearly amid the confusions of this period of uncertainty and war. There is the obligation of carrying through plans for adequate national defense. And we must live up to our commitments on material aid to beleaguered Britain—commitments which were definitely short of war. It is increasingly urgent to work out a feasible plan for feeding the starving peoples that will not impair the blockade. It is high time to begin drawing up in collaboration with other nations the bases for a just and enduring peace; so far the question of war aims has virtually been ignored. American democracy must be developed into more of a reality to serve as a powerful attraction in an increasingly mutually-conscious world. America must act and it will fulfill its rôle as a vital force in reconstruction of the world by engaging in activities such as these rather than by embarking on a course which will spread the area and intensity of destruction and relegate to remote generations the task of rebuilding a shattered world.

EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

Communications

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

Portsmouth Priory School.

TO the Editors: Mr. Michael Williams in his excellent article in your issue of January 17th suggests that we do something about the appalling mental stagnation that affects so many Catholics after leaving college and which manifests itself by a neglect of substantial reading. Fortunately, we do not need to look very far for means of action, because in the same issue Mr. Lippmann provides an answer. His article, "Education Without Culture," although directed toward trends in secular education, contains a criticism which is applicable to Catholic educational methods as well.

While it is true that in our educational work we Catholics are blessed by a unified religious principle which is denied to those in the secular educational field, yet we appear to ignore the tradition of liberal education which Mr. Lippmann describes so well. Parents and teachers in Catholic schools naturally consider religious instruction essential for their children. Beyond this they still ask whether "the education is useful for life and they tend by and large to mean by useful that which equips the pupil for a career which will bring him money and place and power." Catholic schools, perhaps quite unwittingly, have embraced the heresy which Mr. Lippmann deplores in the secular schools. They have progressively removed from the curriculum of studies the basis of western culture and "have, therefore, been sending into the world men who

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no longer understand the creative principle of society in which they live." This criticism of Catholic education is not intended as a sweeping general condemnation but rather as an indication that it lacks the independence necessary to make a complete break with secular trends. As a result there is a compromise which may prove disastrous to Catholic education also. There is a tendency to place religion in a watertight compartment with little relation to true education and the business of living. Perhaps this compromise as much as anything else is responsible for the condition which Mr. Williams deplores.

The young priests, the young men and women of the laity, who go through colleges and seminaries and who drop all books behind when they have entered their life work, do so because they have been taught that "education equips the pupil for a career which will bring him money, place and power." Until Catholic education itself can be true to its traditions as the inheritor of western culture and can present a curriculum designed to produce a fully integrated Catholic, the mental vacuum which is filled only by the shallow and misconceived "aggressive Catholicism" of certain periodicals will persist.

FRANCIS D. WHITE.

The Stage & Screen

The Leading American Actress

THERE is a certain juvenility in the American pastime of voting on who is the best this and that—the college student most likely to succeed, the most popular girl in the class, the foremost athlete of the year. And yet it has an engaging side: it is a symbol of democracy. Even Mr. George Jean Nathan, who would rather take a ten-mile hike than be accused of juvenility, a year or so ago had a contest with himself as to who was the leading American actress, and decided on Katherine Cornell. The other ladies he considered were Helen Hayes, who was apparently the runner-up, Ina Claire and Lynn Fontanne. He left out a lady, however, who surely had a right to be considered an American—that is, if Miss Fontanne had. The lady, like Miss Fontanne, is English, and like her has done the finest things of her career in America. Therefore we may consider her an American by adoption, as she is now one by marriage. I give you Miss Gertrude Lawrence.

I wrote about her somewhat ecstatically indeed last week in my review of "Lady in the Dark." I want to speak about her now a little more calmly but no less enthusiastically, for to me Miss Lawrence and not Miss Cornell is the leading actress in the English-speaking world. I say this because I believe she can do everything Miss Cornell can do—perhaps in one or two rôles which require poetry of personality, not quite as supremely, but magnificently enough—and she can do a dozen other things which Miss Cornell with her good sense would never attempt.

Miss Lawrence can play high comedy as brilliantly as

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Miss Claire, middle-class comedy as well as Miss Hayes, musical comedy better than anyone else in the world. Moreover she can be glamorous, pathetic, passionate, neurotic, repressedly emotional, flamboyantly emotional, witty, arch and coquettish—and do it all in one evening when the playwright gives her the opportunity. Artistically she can be all things to all men and to all women. Miss Hayes is versatile, but it is often the versatility of mere technique, and she hasn't the distinction which Miss Lawrence can portray. Of course there are things I can't see Miss Lawrence doing, and Queen Victoria is one of them—though I'm not so sure she couldn't do her if she tried. Perhaps Miss Fontanne comes nearest Miss Lawrence in her range of parts, but charming and intelligent as Miss Fontanne is, she misses the height of that dynamic impetus which is the final quality of the supreme actress. While Miss Claire is Miss Lawrence's equal in brittle comedy, she misses the note of feeling which Miss Lawrence sounds even in high comedy. Miss Lawrence humanizes artificiality. Perhaps to some this may seem a weakness; it does not seem so to me.

Yet I have a bone to pick with Miss Lawrence. The plays she appears in are inferior to her talents. I want to see her in Shakespeare, as Portia, Viola, Rosalind, Ophelia; in Sheridan, as Lady Teazel; in Congreve, as Millamont; in Rostand, as Roxane. This is a day of small things in the contemporary drama; a talent such as Miss Lawrence's requires for its complete revelation the great field of the classic theatre. A first rate actress in second and third rate plays is really an occasion for sorrow. Of course I don't realize that when I see Miss Lawrence in those plays; she is too magnetic and magnificent in herself. But it is a fact, none the less.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

On Thin Ice

"BACK STREET" is the kind of a picture that depends principally on story; and when, as in this case, the story is dated, the film, no matter how good the execution, will seem like something warmed over. Those who saw the Irene Dunne-John Boles version of 1932 will find this remake less teary and less convincing. Although changed, the outline of Fannie Hurst's novel is still recognizable as the plot reveals the sad plight of a woman who lives on the edge of society and in back streets because she loves and is the mistress of a nationally and socially prominent married man. She is a dress designer and supposedly a woman of intelligence and ideas-ahead-of-her-times (the 1890's to 1928). Margaret Sullavan gives her charm and beauty. Charles Boyer does the best he can with the most caddish rôle that he or any other male star has had to play in films. He is handsome, especially as the years advance, but he is unable to bring conviction to a part that depends on quirks of circumstance and the selfishness of a man who would put the woman he pretends to love in such a position. Bruce Manning's production is excellent with the turn-of-the-century period being well recreated in costumes and sets. The entire cast, which includes Richard Carlson, Frank McHugh and Tim Holt, respond well to Robert Stevenson's deft direction.

Although the idea behind *"Flight from Destiny"* doesn't quite come off, the film should get credit for being something different in cinema. As a philosophy professor who knows that his heart will give out in six months Thomas Mitchell finds dying more of a problem than living. He thinks he can solve the problem by committing a murder that will benefit society. Too conveniently, Mona Maris turns up as his victim when she breaks up the marriage of Geraldine Fitzgerald and Jeffrey Lynn. After he has killed this wicked, much hated vampire he has difficulty in proving that he is the murderer, and not until this misguided philosopher (who considers life a work of art whose main virtue is that when it's done it's done) is on his way to the electric chair does he realize his crime as sin. He finally admits that he is a self-appointed god like all killers. Director Vincent Sherman has tried in vain to instill action into Barry Trivers's talky screenplay. Although Mitchell's performance is excellent and his characterization is impressively moving, the continued humor regarding death becomes too grim and the unbalanced standards and values that are discussed and rehashed are too unbelievably naïve for any teacher of philosophy, no matter to what school he belongs.

Most of the critics seem to have gone overboard in praising *"Tall, Dark and Handsome."* I found it a mildly amusing burlesque of the old gangster pictures, with good performances contributed by Cesar Romero, Charlotte Greenwood, Sheldon Leonard and Milton Berle. Although the film was badly cut and H. Bruce Humberstone's direction was awkward and unevenly paced, the finished result does succeed in working up some hilarious fun through razzing gangsters and the early movies about them. The fun sours however when Stanley Clements, as a youngster, enters too wholeheartedly into the spirit of the piece.

If Director Robert B. Sinclair had any idea in connection with *"The Wild Man of Borneo,"* he failed to convey it to his audience. I doubt even if the original play by Marc Connelly and Herman J. Mankiewicz, produced

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in 1927, was much of a hit. It's about a medicine man of the early 1900's who comes to New York, and to impress his daughter and a boarding house full of theatrical folk, pretends he is doubling for Richard Mansfield. Frank Morgan, Billie Burke, Donald Meek, Marjorie Main and Bonita Granville are in it, but are not too wildly enthusiastic.

If the show that the bunch of stage-struck WPA youngsters put on in *"Dancing on a Dime"* is typical of the Federal Theatre one can hardly blame Congress for not continuing the project. And if the young folk concerned have any ability, they don't have a chance to show it in this picture. It has one swell production number, "Débutante No. 1" (that even Noel Coward wouldn't have been ashamed of some ten years ago), but good as it is, it's not worth sticking around for through all the flood and mass of drivel. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

Fine Apologetics

The Necessity for the Church. W. E. Orchard, D.D. Longmans. $1.75.

THIS IS the writing of a theologian and a thinker who knows his matter so well that into a volume of 150 pages he can fit the entire gamut of *pro* and *con* of the Catholic position. His compact style shows a rare balance of words, reflecting the nicer balance of his evidence and judgments. There is such an ease of touch and emphasis—not one word too much—that long reflection, wide experience and profound knowledge must lie behind them. The tone is one of polite impartiality. The writing is dignified, with a tendency to the long sentence, but there is none of the dullness that often results from this use. A chaste, almost crystalline quality prevails throughout; also a noble charity.

Belief in the Church is the issue. Dr. Orchard analyzes and discerns, with something of the sangfroid of the surgeon, those concepts and loyalties of faith lying near to the heart of man, indicating the extremes of heretical opinion and the difficulties raised against the Catholic Church, and showing why the Church is necessary, to those that are far off and to those that are nigh. Agnosticism and sectarianism, communism and fascism, nationalism and sentimentalism—all these incomplete systems are but caricatures of some Christian principle found in its wholeness in the Catholic Church; and the manifold systems emphasizing personal religious experience, far from being independent of the Church, derive from and depend upon the Church in their origin and often in their details. Only one body speaks with authority, and now if ever in the course of human history men need an unshakable authority in the realm of ideas and action.

Unlike the old-fashioned manuals of apologetics, this work, written in the flowing, dignified essay form, refuses to systematize arguments and answers; the author prefers to go deeper, to philosophical and psychological principles. He shows the sweet reasonableness of the Catholic Church and thus evokes more an atmosphere of faith than of logic. The book points to the man: Dr. Orchard should be a tower of strength and a beacon to the confused and the vacillating. RICHARD FLOWER, O.S.B.

BIOGRAPHY

In the Shadow of Lincoln's Death. Otto Eisenschiml. Wilfred Funk. $3.00.

My Dear Lady. Marjorie Barstow Greenbie. Whittlesey House. $2.75.

IN this his latest book Mr. Eisenschiml has written a well-documented history of the trial and execution of Mrs. Surratt who, with several others, was put to death for the murder of Lincoln. By many at the time of its occurrence her trial and execution was considered a cruel miscarriage of justice. An account of the abuses of "arbitrary arrest," one of the consequences of Mr. Lincoln's suspension of the right of habeas corpus, is given in a chapter entitled "Stanton's Reign of Terror." The description of the Old Capital Prison in Washington, a sort of concentration camp where suspected persons were hidden away without the formality of a trial, brings to mind the force of the old saying that history repeats itself.

The author has managed to construct out of dry official records a narrative with the absorbing interest of a well-written detective story.

Mrs. Greenbie, in "My Dear Lady," has rescued from oblivion a neglected figure of the tragic and revolutionary eighteen sixties. This neglected figure is Anne Carroll, shrewd business woman, professional politician, and amateur spy. The neglect is explained by the fact that she was the brain trust of a political group for the most composed of mediocre men, and she was a woman. Although cradled in the agrarian tradition of the old South, Miss Carroll's sympathies were with the ambitions of the industrialists who were chafing at the restraining influence of agrarian leadership. When the struggle between the older culture and the new thing that threatened its existence came to an issue, she threw in her lot with the North and put her talents at the disposal of that political group which was destined to rise to dominance upon the ruin of her own Southland.

Our interest lies in the glimpse we are given into the hidden politics of the war administration. It appears that Miss Carroll was the unseen counsellor whose advice was followed by Mr. Lincoln in taking such unprecedented steps as the suspension of the right of habeas corpus, and the arbitrary arrest of the Maryland Legislature—to insure its loyalty. Miss Carroll was also the originator of the strategy by which General Grant succeeded in dividing the Confederate states. This strategy we are asked to believe was revealed to Miss Carroll from on high, in answer to an earnest request addressed to the Deity.

It is unfortunate that Mrs. Greenbie has let her prejudices mar the objectivity of this interesting study. As seen through her eyes the most complicated chapter in American history takes on all the moral naïveté of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." For Mrs. Greenbie, as well as for her heroine, all who supported Mr. Lincoln in his, to say the least, questionable proceedings are hailed as disinterested patriots, while all who opposed the same proceedings in the honest conviction that they were unconstitutional are branded as dastardly traitors.

The mood is that of Mrs. Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and this book will be read with undissenting pleasure by those who accept the national saga as interpreted by the partisans of the North. Upon the ears of others who, with the late Lord Acton, see in the tragedy of Appomatox the collapse of that promising experiment which the wisdom of the Founding Fathers

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reared upon an agrarian tradition brought from England—at a time when that land was still unspoiled by the industrial revolution— and who see in the triumph of government by big business, for big business, over the rights and interests of rural minorities, the fateful last stages of that same industrial revolution transferred to the New World, Mrs. Greenbie's seriously drawn comparison between Anne Carroll and the Maid of Orleans will fall somewhat flat. There is in this review no question of impugning the integrity of Lincoln whom thousands venerate as a good and great man. It is however possible that, as Mr. Christopher Hollis suggests, Lincoln was throwing his weight unwittingly in the wrong direction.

WILLIAM WILFRID BAYNE.

Juggernaut Over Holland. E. M. van Kleffens. Columbia. $2.00.

LIKE a tragedy, in which the victim, though innocent, is visited with the family curse, reads this description of Holland's fall by the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, E. M. van Kleffens. For, though at the outbreak of the war, the Netherlands was a contented and neutral country, it was nevertheless part of the ruinous economy of modern imperialism and hence susceptible to the contagion of Europe's war. So inviolable was thought to be Dutch neutrality that despite the crescendo of ominous signs such as the sinking of Dutch ships, the massing of German troops along the border, the mysterious increase of the German diplomatic staff at the Hague, Holland did not enlist the aid of the Allied Powers. Even the message from the War Office on the fateful ninth of May —"Tomorrow at dawn; hold tight"—did not shake this firm decision. And with the dawn, came the swift dénouement.

The threat of nazi victory becomes more and more serious, but there co-exists a sense of the hollowness of Hitler's rule of force, of the fundamental lack of unity of an empire where men are coerced instead of governed. Like all protagonists who have clung to their principles despite the destruction of those things they most valued, this little country transcends captivity. In the words of the author, "There is a keen sense that the Netherlands must become a free country again. Its people cannot be permanently stifled. . . ." In common with many eye-witness accounts, *Juggernaut Over Holland* is more or less superficial reporting of the facts, eloquent in themselves to be sure, and it even preserves something of Dutch neutrality. But in a work of this kind, the question nearly always arises as to whether the author is not too close to the actual events to be really impartial. It is somewhat disappointing also not to find a less conventional approach to Europe's crisis on the part of one who has, for a moment, touched its very heart. MARGARET STERN.

Second Wind. Carl Zuckmayer. Doubleday. $2.50.

THIS is not an easy book to review; it was not altogether easy reading. Carl Zuckmayer, a versatile and prolific German author, has written an autobiographical account of his adult years in a crisp, impulsive manner. The first World War took from him, while he was still a very young soldier, his ideals and illusions of patriotism, courage and glory. It left him memories that were drab and ugly. There are terrible indications of the brutalizing effect of war. He creates a vivid picture of a virile nation, as it rallies from humiliating defeat and near annihilation to an intellectual renaissance, an unparalleled political and military arrogance, which culminate in conquest and retaliation. Zuckmayer writes of political changes, not as a political scientist, but as a playwright. There are charming descriptions of professional and successful Bohemian life, gay, clever and sophisticated, nonchalant. War horrors are described vividly and they haunt one; there are unpleasant physiological details that could well have been omitted. Vague references to morals and matrimony seem to indicate a rather casual Catholicism. As one might expect, there are fine dramatic contrasts. One afternoon in Vienna, the theatre dark except for the stage, actors and author are lost in the intensity of a dress rehearsal for the evening's première. They leave the theatre, only to find that in the world outside a more intense political drama has reached its dénouement with the Anschluss. After the terror and confusion of his escape, Carl Zuckmayer gets his "Second Wind." With resilience and courage, he is hewing wood in the wilds of Vermont, for his coffee. It is an interesting book, perhaps it is a significant book. It is well printed and a pleasant book to handle. It has been excellently translated by Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood. The introduction is by Dorothy Thompson. JOHANNA DONIAT.

Johnson Without Boswell. Hugh Kingsmill. Knopf. $2.50.

MR. KINGSMILL has gathered and arranged in chronological order the great mass of information about Samuel Johnson that exists independently of Boswell's famous "Life." He has made selection from Sir John Hawkins's confused and turgid biography, from the memoirs of Mrs. Piozzi and the short biography by Arthur Murphy, the letters and private prayers composed by Johnson himself and, in general, from every source beyond the Boswell canon. Although there is no new material produced to interest the scholar, the book has value for the common reader who has neither time nor opportunity to search out the non-Boswell legend of Johnson from the many, dispersed sources where it may be found.

It must not be imagined that any new or strange impression of the subject is the result of this process. The different angles of vision embodied in what the book's sub-title calls "a contemporary portrait" only implement and round out the figure of Johnson as Boswell presented it. The essential greatness of Boswell's work is displayed by such a work as this, for we see for ourselves how fragmentary and supplemental a portrait even so cunningly constructed a work as Mr. Kingsmill's contrives for us.

J. G. E. HOPKINS.

FICTION

The Remarkable Andrew. Dalton Trumbo. Lippincott. $2.50.

WHEN Andrew Long, accountant for Shale City, Colorado, found that the city fathers had helped themselves to some of the taxpayers' cash, he reported it to the proper authorities. Naturally Andrew was accused of taking the money and was jailed.

Of course, the author of "Johnny Got His Gun" didn't write another book only to relate this sad tale. The bookkeeper of Shale City had a hero, General Andrew Jackson of New Orleans fame. During the time of Andrew's travail, the liquory, splenetic General assumes corporeal form and brings with him the ghosts of George Washington, Justice Marshall, Ben Franklin and others to help Andrew out. Follows a dialogue between the present and

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past Andrews on the policy of the present administration. The poor, perplexed General can only splutter "Treason" at the disclosure of the transfer of our fighting material to England. He is aghast at the idea that the law prohibits Andrew from duelling the mayor on a point of honor. The book is a splendid indictment of small minds, of propaganda victims, of the hysteria of our times.

Ten years ago this book would have had a great sale. Today, because people are exactly as the author portrays them, it will not go over. Their thought patterns closely parallel Dorothy Thompson's love of peace.

WILLIAM M. CALLAHAN.

In the Money. William Carlos Williams. New Directions. $2.50.

DR. WILLIAMS had written some of the disturbing poems of this century; yet he never received his just attention until New Directions began publishing his work. Recently, James Laughlin republished Williams's continually provocative essays on American history: "In The American Grain." Now New Directions has brought out "In The Money," the sequal to Williams's novel of two years ago: "White Mule." With the same terrible simplicity with which he began his chronicle of Joe Stecher, the German-American printer, Williams continues the story of Stecher, of his ambitious wife Gurlie, and of his children Lottie and Flossie.

A balloon lost, a Christmas tree decorated, a little girl haunted by a nightmare, such are the really startling events recounted in "In The Money." Told artlessly, they all but undermine the reader. "What a disillusionment!" Williams remarks as a balloon sails into the sky. And one is seized by the sentence.

Long after the "important" books of this season have been forgotten, Dr. Williams's unimposing narrative of Joe Stecher will be read and re-read.

SCIENCE

Wildlife Conservation. Ira N. Gabrielson. Macmillan. $3.50.

WHILE the United States has been niggardly about many things—permitting the sale of foreign goods in American markets, accepting immigrants when the need of cheap labor had passed, the export of surplus food to famine areas, for instance—we have been positively prodigal in the way we have exploited or thrown away the vast riches with which this continent was endowed by our Creator. Only in recent years has there been a consistent attempt on a nationwide scale to conserve what natural riches are left and repair where possible the ravages of destroyed forests and mined soil. As Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior, Dr. Gabrielson is in direct touch with much of this important work. He has written a book packed with information for the average reader with no technical knowledge of soils, little waters, grasslands, forests or animal life. There is genuine satisfaction in learning that wild life inhabits the forest edge rather than the forest depths where the "canopy" is closed to the sky, that game and fur-bearing and other animals can be nurtured by making scattered clearings or selective cuttings equivalent to the annual growth of the trees, that viewed in the large "it is the part of wisdom to grow forests on all suitable lands not needed for some other purpose." In the face of the undoubted drudgery of much farm work, it is heartening to know that a few bushes, vines and weeds set in corners of the fields or planted in gullies stripped bare by erosion will attract coveys of quail and broods of rabbits. Or this welcome adjunct can be achieved even more successfully by planting narrow strips of food-producing crops. Intelligent use of water to provide marshes and ponds will further increase resources.

Dr. Gabrielson has a readable style as well as a rich fund of pertinent information. The resources of the country would fare well if protected and developed by men of a like mind with his. He does not hesitate to recommend the public ownership of depleted lands to restore the vast grasslands over which millions of buffalo and antelope once wandered. If the country followed his counsel it would not leave the guardianship of wild life to state officials whose chief concern is to provide good hunting and fishing for sportsmen or who neglect resources in fur-bearing animals which are now so seriously threatened by the trapping of the young. Happily there is reason to believe that the nation has already embarked on a vigorously constructive conservation policy.

The author has the further advantage of having at hand a remarkable file of candid shots of various forms of American wild life. Anyone who has doubts about the appropriateness of the bald eagle as the noble "symbol of the American ideals of freedom" should see his B2998M, "photographer unknown." For the sentimental I should recommend B4879a, a black duck; B4544M, a beaver; B598M, young wood thrushes. The pictures alone are enough to set a nature-lover's thoughts skipping toward the mirage of spring. EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

Germs and the Man. Justina Hill. Putnam. $3.75.

Darby, Darby, I've been thinkin'—
Though it doesn't personally matter to me—
I have a simple apprehension
Of a great big—hmpf! hmpf!—tree.

THUS SANG we to honor our teacher of philosophy, the Reverend Michael O'Brien, fifty years ago, almost. He inoculated us so well against popularizations of knowledge (hmpf!) that I was not captured by Justina Hill's cloistered laughter and *simplicitas* and her very uncloistered vitality until I reached page 16, where enter bacterial spores. The born teacher's voice speaks there and I capitulated. She has written just the book we-all would have had her write.

"McCulloch gives an astounding estimate of what one germ could do under ideal conditions for multiplication. Starting with a single cell, there would be 8 by the end of the first hour, 64 by the end of the second hour. By the eighth hour the original germ would have 16,000,000 descendants. By the end of a very busy day the theoretical possibility would be a mere 4,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000, whatever that is. If each of these germs had been approximately 1/20,000 of an inch long and 1/30,000 of an inch thick, the progeny of one organism in one day would fill a one-inch pipe reaching from New York to San Francisco."

. . . All right, Mr. Editor, I'll cut it short since you insist. Here's the book; read it yourself: you will arise from it with an enormous amount of biological science and history and good cheer in your system. But don't bother me with the loud cries of maddened readers who, I'll bet, are already complaining that when I get a nice book to review you never give me room enough to move 'round in it! E. L. KEYES.

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Our Trembling Earth. Joseph Lynch, S.J. Dodd. $3.00.

THIS IS an interesting and instructive book. The author has a rare ability to explain a difficult subject in terms easily understandable to the non-scientific reader. The only rigorously scientific discussion is reserved for an appendix. To most people earthquakes are about the most interesting of Earth phenomena because of their frequency of occurrence, the damage they cause and the terror they occasion in the minds of those subjected to them. They are also about the least understood of all phenomena.

"Our Trembling Earth" shows where earthquakes occur with greatest frequency and intensity. It explains what they are and how they are located and identified. It gives a brief history of disastrous quakes, which means a separate chapter for the Japanese ones, and explains the value of the science of seismology to the general public, to other sciences and to industry. It explains the workings of a seismic observatory and of that theoretically simple but actually complicated recording instrument, the seismograph. The illustrations include many reproductions of the records of earthquakes traced by that instrument. The distributions of recording stations, the way in which the records of individual stations are integrated, and the passage of earthquake waves through the crust and the core of the Earth are clearly described. The types of earthquake waves and their manner of travel through the Earth are explained with unusual clarity.

One of the most interesting things in the book is a statement of the means employed to track down the disturbances caused by city traffic and railroad trains and the dismay caused one morning when the milk train slipped by so slowly that it left no record. And there is the story of how the Jesuits happen to be leaders in seismology, meteorology and astronomy. WILLIAM M. AGAR.

TRAVEL

Behind God's Back. Negley Farson. Harcourt. $3.50.

A MAGNIFICENT BOOK, this, splotched, inchoate, eviscerated, full of human interest and repetitive errors of diction—but magnificent just the same. For Negley Farson knows how to mix his episodes, insert the popularly esteemed descriptive passages, dramatize a narrative and ride down politico-social truths without going stale.

His title for the present volume is based upon a South African's description of what goes on in Southwest Africa, "behind God's back." But it is made to apply to all of Southwest, South, East, Congo, Equatorial Africa, and the Cameroons, as well as to an epilogue about the Gold Coast and an Earthquake. The subject matter, social, political and anecdotal, deals with a trip from Walvis Bay across the southern and eastern coastal belts to Dar es Salaam, thence by Ford across the continent into the Congo, Equatorial Africa and the Cameroons, and on, *via* airplane, to the Gold Coast.

One will meet with nazis, Boers, Bushmen and the natives of the "closed region" of the southwest. Thence one is led to Cape Colony and its seething political hatreds. From Durban the narrator takes us on a boat trip to Tanganyika and on a wild ride across central Africa, close to the Equator. Lion hunting and elephant hunting, more nazis and the infiltration of British officials, Oldeani and Kilimanjaro, bad roads, humorous anecdotes . . . then on to Nairobi, the Paris of East Africa, with excursions into the high ranges between Tanganyiki and Victoria, between Lakes Edward and Kivo, and wild-animal-photographing in Ruanda-Urundi (with Hubert the fearless) as well as gorilla hunts, buffalo hunts, and political asides: all these make an engrossing story.

Space prohibits even an outline of this book's scope, or its 555 pages. Suffice it to say that Mr. Farson is a past-master of the super-journalese nowadays so highly esteemed. He has produced one of the most interesting volumes about Africa to have ever appeared in English. If his views on politics seems strangely illogical at times, he is not to be blamed; for he writes as a journalist and not as a scholar. One wishes, however, that he had paid more heed to the authoritative writings of Townshend and Buell, particularly the latter's "Native Problem in Africa," as well as to papers concerning the mandates which are not specifically the publications of His Majesty's Stationery Office. There is evidenced much gullibility in the author's naïve acceptance of purely English explanations, and this makes his thesis one-sided. Nevertheless "Behind God's Back" is assuredly a successful attempt to popularize the story of the darker parts of the dark continent in our own times, and to demonstrate that the native African is a more estimable person than are many of his European conquerors. LLOYD WENDELL ESHLEMAN.

Venezuela. Henry J. Allen. Doubleday. $3.50.

IN these days of Pan-American enthusiasm a book which deals with the natural beauty and the everyday life of Venezuela, its fascinating history and the work of the present administration, will be welcome. Henry J. Allen, former governor of Kansas, writes with experience and many-sided knowledge, not as a critical observer, but as an ardent apologist: eager to make you believe that there is no more honest democracy in this world of ours than the present government of Venezuela. The experienced reader will take the overstatements at their real value, yet find this well-written travel book a key to precious information.

Venezuela has a population of about four millions, consisting of perhaps 5 percent pure-bred Spanish, 10 percent Negro, 40 percent Indian and 45 percent Mestizo. It is evident that the melting of races is not yet accomplished. It is also evident—though Venezuela till now is not threatened seriously by fascism or communism—that there are notable obstacles to democracy, that the masses are touched only lightly by the thought of self-government, that they show still stolid indifference to many national questions of greatest importance and that feudalism is not yet completely dead.

Venezuela is a rich agricultural country, one of the world's great oil fields but also rich in other natural resources such as gold mines, diamond fields, iron ore deposits. Rapid industrialization is planned in the coming years. Allen enjoys the spirit of enterprise and the growing prosperity. What this rapid change in the economic and sociological basis may mean to the soul of the inhabitants, how their uprooting from the soil and the creation of a typical urban proletariat might be avoided, or compensated, does not alarm him; he optimistically believes that these dangers will be sterilized by the government's "remarkable emphasis on education." MAX FISCHER.

Into China. Eileen Bigland. Macmillan. $3.00.

MRS. BIGLAND writes with that variety of gusto which can make any travel book interesting, and when she adds to gusto a subject exciting in itself, you

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have a book worth reading—if you like travel books. I confess that I have always had a weakness for them.

We have all vaguely heard of the Burma Road and how vital it is to the success of Chiang Kai shek's continued resistance against the Japanese; vaguely we have heard that the whole idea of the highway originated with Sun Yat-sen. But of course the American notion of a highway is something which could not possibly be the Burma Road. We think of concrete or asphalt or at least tar. Of such there is none on this immensely important artery. Rather there is mud and mud and more mud.

Indeed, to judge from Mrs. Bigland's account, the mud must be almost incredibly viscuous, or the buses and trucks sold to the Chinese incredibly bad. For scarcely a day passes without a breakdown, and all progress is at a literal snail's pace. Yet she does finally get to Kunming, and then by air to Chungking. She sees terrible sights. She sees disease and misery and death. She sees Japanese bombs fall into crowded streets, and she pays high tribute to the heroism of the French Sisters who operate a hospital in the present capital of China. Mrs. Bigland herself puts in a bout with fever and is cured with opium. She goes nearly mad with the suffering and squalor and fatalism she sees around her. And when she leaves Chungking she is on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

But larded through her three hundred pages are encounters with charming and fantastic characters, like the Buddhist monk who wanted a copy of a recent work by Josephus! Her appreciation of the good side of Chinese character is infectious and arouses one's every sympathy. She can tell an excellent anecdote. But there is one objection I must make to her book. She is obsessed with the idea that she must discover the *soul,* the *meaning,* the *key* (use any word you want) to China. After much emotional gyrating, she lands upon this key in China's *soil.* Which is not really quite so significant as Mrs. Bigland seems to think. Could we not, in such pleasant books, be spared a portentousness which after all is completely unnecessary and in no way helps to hold a reader weary of people's trying to find keys for locks that are entirely imaginary anyhow?

HARRY LORIN BINSSE.

BRIEFERS

The Donkey Inside. Ludwig Bemelmans. Viking. $3.00.

WHETHER he describes an equatorial jungle or a bill of fare, an Amazonian head-hunter or a Swiss butterfly-collector, Ludwig Bemelmans has the engaging facility of warming your heart with that almost-forgotten quality of *gemütlichkeit.* Like his wry, winsome drawings, his prose combines the fresh vision of an imaginative child with a sly, civilized shrewdness. His latest volume is about Ecuador—an Ecuador you and I, unhappily, will never discover, but which he brings to life with a reality beyond mere literalism. Four double-page color illustrations supplement this enchanting prize-package.

Belloc on Chesterton. Hilaire Belloc. S. & W. $1.00.

THE full title of this slender volume is "On the Place of Chesterton in English Letters." In it Belloc gives what he considers the essential characteristics of G.K.'s writings. Chesterton was essentially national, his Englishry was his leading characteristic. He also possessed extreme precision of thought; had an extraordinary capacity for parallelism, but his work was literary rather than historical. And it was charity and joy that suffused his thought, not bitterness and invective. Lastly the acceptance of the Faith fashioned still further his approach to the men and movements of the day. Incisive writing, clear and brilliant. Yet it leaves the impression of being but a slight treatment of the place of Chesterton in English letters.

Recent America. H. B. Parkes. Crowell. $4.50.

AN interesting and simply written history of the US from 1900 to the present. The book is divided into five major sections, the heritage of the nineteenth century, the progressive era, the first World War, the twenties, and the last concerns itself with the depression, the New Deal and the changing social and economic system of the '30's. Not original or startling but serviceable and well worth reading.

Constitutional Chaff. J. Butzner. Columbia. $2.25.

WHAT did the authors of the Constitution think about the power of the courts to declare laws unconstitutional? What did they think about a limitation on the number of terms for the president? Whose ideas did they reject? These are some of the questions answered by this book. It also gives character sketches of delegates to the constitutional convention by William Pierce.

Discussion of Holidays in the Middle Ages. E. C. Rodgers. Columbia. $1.50.

WHAT was the atitude of medieval people to the innumerable church holidays, what the place they occupied in their scheme of life, how was the resultant leisure employed and what the economic consequences of said days? These are some of the questions answered by the author. On the interesting side.

Pope Innocent III and His Times. Joseph Clayton. Bruce. $2.50.

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NOTHING seems more lifeless than the political billingsgate of yesteryear, but Mark Twain's "hitherto unpublished papers" also include some anecdotes on writers and publishing that make pleasant reading.

John Dryden: Some Biographical Facts and Problems. James M. Osborn. Columbia. $3.50.

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The Inner Forum

LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY 1941 marks the golden jubilee of the founding of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People. On that day 50 years ago Katharine Drexel, daughter of a wealthy Philadelphia family, made her profession as a nun at the Sisters of Mercy Novitiate in Pittsburgh. Through Bishop O'Connor of Omaha she had become deeply interested in the problem of Indian missions and had gone to the West to see the situation at first hand. Later in a private audience with Leo XIII, in the course of which Katharine Drexel begged the Holy Father to send missionaries to the American Indians he replied, "My child, why do not you yourself become a missionary?"

Sister Katharine at the time of her profession took, in addition to the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, a vow to labor exclusivley for the Indians and Colored People. By May, 1891, a group of 13 novices and postulants left the Sisters of Mercy Novitiate to join her at the temporary motherhouse and novitiate which had been set up in the old Drexel homestead at Torresdale, Pa. The following year the youthful community transferred to a permanent house at Cornwells, Pa.

Mother Katharine considered her wealth as held in trust for the work of her apostolate; in her own personal life her tastes were so simple and her wants so few that people meeting her for the first time in a group of Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament felt that she was the one who least looked the part of foundress, superior and benefactress.

The best-known and most specular of the achievements of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament is the foundation and operation of Xavier University of New Orleans, the only Catholic university for Negroes in the United States. The Sisters also conduct a number of mission centers, a boarding academy and a home for colored children, four boarding schools for Indians, ten high schools and thirty elementary schools. According to the *Colored Harvest,* "The greatest contribution of Mother Katharine Drexel, it would seem, is her personal example of Christliness in devotion to the cause of the Negroes and Indians in a day when the friends of the despised races were few and reviled, in a day when it took courage to espouse the cause of the downtrodden Negroes and forgotten Indians."

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